



Our **VISION** is safe and healthy children, youth and families learning and growing to their full potential in supportive communities.

The **MISSION** of the Children's Services Network is advocacy to meet the needs of children, youth and families in San Luis Obispo County through development and support of community partnerships.

**VALUES:** The Children's Services Network values respect for individuals and the prevention of problems as its first priorities. The CSN encourages the development and implementation of interactions, programs and services that are collaborative and incorporate the "best practices" of being family centered, strength based, needs driven, solution oriented and community based.

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**IN PRACTICE**, the philosophy and values of the CSN are best demonstrated in the operation of the SAFE System of Care (**S**ervices **A**ffirming **F**amily **E**mpowerment). The key philosophical foundations of prevention, partnership, advocacy, Best Practices and Asset Development define partner agency staff and management approaches to service design and delivery.

- ❖ **Prevention:** Many system-of-care models focus primarily on the high-end expensive services that attempt to keep already-troubled youth from entering high level out-of-county placements. While that effort must be a component of any system of care, the CSN wanted to build on the positive foundations of the Healthy Starts, Youth Task Forces and other community based projects that were helping children and youth avoid reaching a critical stage where they are at risk of losing their home and school placement. The SAFE System of Care was developed to provide school-based resource staff at every level of service from prevention through intensive intervention.
- ❖ **Partnership**
  - **COMMUNICATION:** It is the intention of the SAFE SOC project to encourage and facilitate an open, respectful and appropriate exchange of opinions, information and ideas between partner agency staff at all levels and between the staff, the CSN Integrated Services Committee members, the CSN partners and the community at large.

- **BLENDED RESOURCES:** Funding, staff, materials
- **COMMON VALUES:** The agencies participating in SAFE identified the following values to guide the project:
  - *Multi-agency case planning* to include the parent and child in the development of the plan
  - *Collaboration and coordination* of service delivery to eliminate narrow interventions, fragmentation and duplication of efforts
  - *Co-location* of multi-agency staff to improve communication, promote cross training and improve understanding of each agency's resources and strengths
  - *Continuum of service* Creating levels of service within an enhanced system of care allows client needs to be met in the least restrictive manner possible
  - *Cultural competence* via bilingual/bicultural staff and focus on improving access to culturally diverse groups
  - *Community-based interventions* provide services in the neighborhoods, schools and homes of the families involved
  - *Child and family centered services* directly involve families in the planning process, supporting and developing natural family resources and strengths
  - *Interagency case planning* for families involved with multiple agencies to determine the most efficient case plan
  - *Evaluation* of the pilot to be conducted through a new countywide effort to track local collaborative projects while accommodating existing agency evaluation needs.
  - *Oversight* to be provided by a multi-agency mid-management committee from the CSN to monitor effectiveness, resolve problematic issues, develop policy, provide direction and assist with outcome reports.

❖ **Advocacy:** Community partnerships, grass-roots prevention, systems change

❖ **Best Practices** in service delivery encompass family-centered, strength-based, solution-oriented, needs-driven and community-based principles. For more information [click here](#).

The shared philosophy and common goals statements developed by the SAFE System of Care staff clearly illustrate this orientation:

Philosophy:

1. Children and families are resilient and there is always hope for change and success.
2. Healthy families ensure safe and secure communities.
3. All individuals including every child deserve the right to be heard.

4. Families have the individual strength and abilities to create safe and healthy environments
5. Families have opportunities through participation in community resources and services

Goals:

1. To develop a single case management system, including a universal intake process and common confidentiality statement.
2. To allow families the opportunity to be part of on-going planning of services, focusing on their individual strengths.
3. To communicate and function as a partnership to promote better access to community resources.
4. To create a replicable system that ensures the health, safety and protection of children and families.

- ❖ **Asset Development:** Research shows that there are key developmental factors and experiences that children need to develop into their full potential. For more information [click here](#).

**Outcomes:**

The experience for families within the SAFE System of Care should be similar, regardless of the area in the county where services are accessed. Progress toward the following goals for children is tracked using a customized database.

- **Children Are Safe**
  - Cared for and protected
  - Not Subject to physical or emotional violence
  - Not placing self at risk of injury or illness
- **Children Are Healthy**
  - Free of disease or illness; or disease or illness medically managed
  - Happy with life and experiencing positive self attitude
  - Free of illicit drugs or alcohol
  - Not pregnant/not causing pregnancy; if pregnant, participating in prenatal care
  - Achieving appropriate level of physical, mental and emotional development
- **Children Live At Home** (or in least restrictive placement)
  - Living in a safe, stable and nurturing environment
  - Interacting positively with all other persons at current residence
  - Receiving appropriate care, shelter, food and other necessities of life
- **Children Are In School** (or appropriate care)
  - Attending school every school day
  - Enrolled in an education program that suits abilities and goals
  - Participating, earning good grades and learning
  - Participating in school enrichment and extra-curricular activities
  - Experiencing positive peer relationships at school

- **Children Stay Out of Trouble**

- Obeying all laws
- Engaged in self-controlled, positive, non-violent behavior
- Not involved with the juvenile justice system
- Not associated or involved with gangs or offenders.

The planning for SAFE System of Care continues to be based on several critical principles:

1. The need to move away from grant status and make this system a part of the every day working responsibilities of the partner agencies.
2. The desire to build on family strengths. A growing body of research shows that interventions with families are better received and have better long-term effect when families become partners in their own support. Healthy Start, the Department of Social Services and several other service providers have been using a Family Unity or Family Group Conferencing model in their work with families. Combining this with Best Practices and Wrap-around services San Luis Obispo County is among the strongest proponents of family strength philosophy in the State. SAFE SOC family conferencing uses the best of these systems to empower families to solve their problems as independently as possible and to become self-sufficient and self-reliant.
3. The desire to develop a true continuum of services from grassroots prevention through community-based intervention and referral to intensive multi-agency treatment. This range of options allows SAFE SOC to provide services based on the participant's presenting need, not the agencies' available programs. As the participant's needs change so can the level of service; likewise, different members of a family can receive appropriate services at different levels at one service delivery location.